

INSTRUMENTS OF POLITICAL CONFORMITY

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ease the entrance of the upper classes into the Party ranks. This was done in 1939.¹² According to Pravda's figures, in 1947 out of five to six million Party members and candidates, about one-third had university or middle school education (1,700,000).¹³ The extent to which these upper classes imposed their dominance over the Party is indicated by the figures according to which at the Eighteenth Party Conference in 1941, the percentage of delegates with a complete college or university education was 41.8 as against only 6.5 percent of the voting delegates with higher education at the Party Congress in 1924.¹⁴

Such a Party structure is very much out of proportion to the general ratio of educated to non-educated classes in the Soviet Union, since at least four-fifths of the Soviet subjects have less than high school education. The Bolshevik Party structure is also greatly out of proportion to the vocational composition of the Soviet Union where still about three-fourths of the population belong to the strata of peasants and of industrial labor. The conspiratorial nature of the Party, the complexity of the Soviet system of rule and the need for increasing specialization of Party members in activities on which the Bolshevik power rests, favor limitation of Party membership to the educated and ruling classes.

The meaning of education and specialization in Soviet power structure becomes clearer if the system of controlled schooling in the Soviet Union is kept in mind. Both university and middle school education are mainly within the reach of higher classes.¹⁵ It is extremely difficult for the average industrial wage-earner or peasant to send any of his children to more than elementary school because the tuition fees and the living costs in educational centers are above his income. The low wages of the industrial labor and the peasantry make it necessary for all family members, including mother and young children, to contribute to the family income by full time or part time work. Also the government conscripts youths for labor reserve battalions mainly from these strata. The children and youths from these strata depend therefore entirely upon the government stipends if they have any ambition and necessary pretraining for higher education. However in selecting candidates for schooling at govern-

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